

There are many questions about political reform. Many skeptics will look at all proposed reform measures and ask whether they'll work and whether there will be unintended consequences. The truth is that they will work and there will be unintended consequences.

But if we use that for an excuse not to change, no good change in this country would ever have come about. There will always be something we cannot foresee. That's what makes life interesting and keeps us all humble, but that must not be an excuse for our refusing to act in this area. We know—we know—when we work to expand our democracy, when you give people a greater voice and advocates of all political views a firm platform upon which to stand, we are moving forward as a nation. By passing campaign finance reform, by renewing the compact between broadcasters and the public to better serve in this new era, we can do that again.

And I will say again, I will do all I can on both these fronts, on campaign finance reform legislation and on requiring free use, free availability of the airwaves to public candidates. We need your support for both, and we need broader and more intense public support. And again I say, that has to be built by demonstrating to the public that this is not an inside-the-Beltway exercise in both parties trying to find ways to undermine each other but a necessary way of opening our democracy so that we can better, more quickly, and more profoundly address the real challenges facing the American people in their everyday lives. These two steps will help, and together I hope we can make them this year.

Thank you very much.

1996 Elections

Q. Mr. President.

The President. Hello, Sarah [Sarah McClendon, McClendon News Service].

Q. I want to know—you said that you would not have been reelected had you not raised that money—

The President. I think—no, I think I probably—I might have been, because I'm the President and a President has unusual access to the public. And you have the Presidential debates, which are unique in terms of their viewership and their potential impact. But I believe that if you just look at the races for Congress and the number of votes that changed just in the last 5 days and how the votes were counted when the votes changed and the movement changed, there is no question that the amount of money deployed in an intelligent way can have a profound impact on the outcome of these elections. And what you want to do is to make sure that everybody has the same fair chance at the voters and nobody has an excessive chance. And given the Supreme Court cases, the way the McCain-Feingold bill is drawn up, plus the effort to get more free air time, are the best responses to overcome the undue influence of excessive money.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:12 a.m. at the National Press Club. In his remarks, he referred to Walter Cronkite, chair, and Paul Taylor, executive director, Free TV for Straight Talk Coalition; Ann McBride, president, Common Cause; Becky Cain, president, National League of Women Voters; and Barry Diller, former chairman, Fox Broadcasting. The Executive order of March 11 establishing the Advisory Committee on the Public Interest Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks Announcing the Economic Plan for the District of Columbia *March 11, 1997*

Thank you. Thank you very much. Mr. Vice President, Representative Norton, Representative Moran, members of the administration, Mr. Mayor, Chairman Brimmer, Mr. Evans, and especially all the citizens of the District of Columbia who are here today.

You know, every year millions of visitors come here, but even those who don't come know a good deal about our Capital. America's eyes and the eyes of the world constantly focus on Washington. They see the good, and there is much

good. There is history here, everywhere, tremendous resources, and talent from all over the world. But there is more as well. There are the people of the District, some of whose families have lived here for generations. They are hardworking, and they are committed to making the community and their neighborhoods better. There are businesses which strive to make it, sometimes under very difficult conditions. There is much dedication and much heart.

In my State of the Union Address, I said that we have to renew our Capital City, to make it the finest place to learn, to work, and to live, because people here deserve no less and because the District matters beyond the city limits. The city is every American's home, and it should be every American's pride. Our Capital City must reflect the best of who we are, what we hope to become, and where we are going.

Washington started as a planned city. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and a soldier and architect named Pierre L'Enfant shared a vision of order and beauty. The boulevards, the museums, the monuments reflect their vision. But this is a different time, and our city needs a new and different vision, one that reaches where the magnificent vistas end; one that touches our schools, where too often books and teachers are in short supply; our streets, where too often children are robbed of their futures, their freedom, and law-abiding citizens too often live in fear of the few who break the law; one that touches the lives of those who want to be responsible in work but lack the opportunity to do so; one that makes businesses want to locate here, to create jobs here, to give the community new economic life and spirit and vitality.

Our strategy must begin to reset the course for a better life for all who call the District home. Our challenge is to revitalize the city as the Nation's Capital, to improve the prospects of self-government to succeed, and to make it a place where people really want to live, to work, to do business. We can clearly do this.

From New York to Chicago to San Francisco, we have seen new life brought to urban areas. Unemployment is down. Crime is down. Things are looking up. We know that if we empower people and we help them within the economic framework, they will do the rest, and that is the heart of our strategy.

Of course, our Capital City faces enormous challenges. Of course, these challenges are, to

some extent, unique to DC and have been a long time in the making. But at least now we have a plan, and we are committed. More of you, in more ways than I have ever seen before, are committed. We at the Federal level must help our Capital City to lift itself to the point where it can be a model for the Nation for revitalization. Working together, we can and we must make Washington once again the proud face America shows to the world.

As the Vice President said, there are steps which have been taken already, but now it's time for the next step, our economic plan for the District of Columbia, an important piece of a larger strategy to build on the work begun and on what we have learned from success stories in other cities about what actually is working there. It reflects our agenda to revitalize urban America. It addresses the unique needs of the District. It recognizes that only the people of the District can lift it up in the end, so it gives people the tools to do the job.

Our \$300 million plan has two parts. First, it will provide \$250 million in Federal tax incentives for jobs and capital to strengthen the economic base in our Capital City. Second, it will provide \$50 million in Federal commitment to help capitalize a new, non-Federal public-private partnership, the DC Economic Development Corporation.

The corporation will develop an economic development strategy, coordinate large-scale development projects, support efforts to create jobs and business opportunities. It will have broad powers to facilitate many existing plans such as the Monumental Core, the Downtown Interactive, and the New York Avenue plans. The Economic Development Corporation will be authorized to allocate a new DC capital credit, which will provide \$95 million in tax credits for investors in and lenders to DC businesses. These credits will be worth up to 25 percent of the amount invested or borrowed. This will help to bring and keep businesses where jobs are needed, and they will be given on a competitive basis to investors and lenders who can do the most for the District and its people.

The corporation will also have authority to issue tax-exempt private activity bonds to finance businesses in hard-hit areas. And it will be able to receive transfers of land or development rights from the Federal Government and from others. It will work with the National Capital Infrastructure Commission we're creating to

make certain that infrastructure and economic development build on each other.

The corporation will be a driving force for our Capital's renewal, for it to take its rightful place in the fast-growing economy of this region and in our Nation. The Federal Government's investment of \$50 million in the corporation is just a start. Our goal is to involve all sectors of the economy in helping the District.

Our plan also includes a new DC jobs credit, available to businesses in the District that hire low- or moderate-income residents living in economically distressed areas. It would provide a 40 percent tax credit on the first \$10,000 of eligible wages in the first year of employment. This jobs credit builds on the work opportunity tax credit passed last year and my proposed welfare-to-work tax credit. Our plan will also allow small businesses in distressed areas to deduct up to \$20,000 in additional expenses for certain equipment costs. Just as we are committed to seeing that self-government works as it should, we have a commitment from the District government to cooperate fully in the Economic Development Corporation.

This is important, but we need more. I challenge business and community leaders to give their unqualified support to bringing back the District. If you're a business or an association in the District, don't give up on it. I commend the members of the National Association of Home Builders, who decided to keep their headquarters here, because that's important for a truly national organization, and it's important for a truly international organization as well. I thank MCI for its decision to keep their offices in the District.

If you're a business making money in the District, then invest here. Follow the lead of Ford Motor Company, which is providing a line of credit to repair emergency, police, fire, and other vehicles. And Ford has set up an automotive program with three District schools.

I want to mention another example of good citizenship as well, and good business. Tomorrow Secretary Cuomo will be on hand as Safeway opens a large supermarket in Southeast DC. It sounds so basic to have access to a grocery store, but that area has not had one in 20 years. Safeway will create 200 new jobs. And we thank you, sir. Thank you very much.

I want to thank all the businesses who are here today for everything you do to support the District. I hope you will work with Director

Raines and Secretary Rubin to develop concrete ways to participate with the Economic Development Corporation and the District and report back to me within 60 days.

The Government will honor its commitment to the District. We know the Federal presence here is critical to the local economy. We know that we must do more, and that is why I have issued a directive to ensure that agencies do all they can to stay here and to contribute here. We want to build on our presence wherever possible. For example, the Navy will boost employment at the Southeast Navy Yard by doubling its current levels by 2001, adding 5,000 jobs here in the District.

As District residents, the First Lady, the Vice President, Tipper, and I will continue to do our part. Recently, the First Lady presented a check for \$18 million to repair our city schools coming from the privatization of Connie Lee, the institution that insures college and university bonds. And our public-private partnership will now benefit District schoolchildren. The First Lady also challenged law firms—I thought that was good—we don't have any shortage of law firms in DC—[laughter]—to expand their efforts to adopt DC schools, to visit with students, to develop relationships with them and mentor them.

I'm proud of all the departments and agencies in the Federal Government that have adopted DC schools. And I would like to say a special word of thanks to my Secret Service detail who gave that to the First Lady and me as a Christmas present not very long ago. I couldn't imagine a better gift. And the work they do at the Kramer School is something that I am particularly proud of.

As the Vice President said, our administration has worked hard to be a good neighbor. But I've asked the Cabinet to do more. You will hear and see a lot of our Cabinet Secretaries in the District. You will see them doing things. In the next 2 weeks, for example, Secretary Albright and Ambassador Richardson will adopt local schools to teach children about diplomacy and geography. Secretary Glickman will announce a renewed effort to glean surplus food from cafeterias at Federal buildings to feed the hungry here in the District. And I'm asking all the Secretaries to report back to me within 90 days with a targeted plan of action for each department to do all it possibly can to help the District.

It has been said that Americans didn't think much of their Capital until they had to defend it during attack in the War of 1812 when, as all of you know, in 1814 the White House was burned. In a way, history is repeating itself, because for too long, Americans have not thought enough about our Capital City. But Washington is still worth fighting for. In fact, it's more worth fighting for than ever.

The people I have seen who live in this city, who do miraculous things every day to try to help people make more of their own lives, to try to help kids in trouble, to try to turn things around and see people live up to their potential, deserve more than the rest of us have done. And I am determined that even though the solu-

tions will not come overnight, we will provide our part of the effort. And together, with local government and business, with the involvement of every citizen, we can have a strategy and implement a strategy that makes Washington the city we all know it ought to be and that we must believe it will be.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:40 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Marion S. Barry, Jr., of the District of Columbia; Andrew F. Brimmer, chairman, DC Financial Responsibility and Management Assistance Authority; and District of Columbia Ward 2 Councilman Jack Evans.

Remarks at a Reception for Senator Byron L. Dorgan

March 11, 1997

Thank you. I'm delighted to be on the stage with 40 percent of all the Democrats from North Dakota. [Laughter] You know, in 1974 it took three of them to lose the race for Congress; I did it at home all by myself. [Laughter] And I now know why they lost. The only person who should have been talking up here was Kim. [Laughter] And she hasn't said a word. I made her go out first tonight so I knew we'd get an applause instead of a boo. [Laughter]

I am delighted to be here. I am honored to be here with Senator Dorgan and Senator Conrad and Congressman Pomeroy. The three of them represent what I hope and believe, philosophically and in terms of their commitment to public service and the way they do their work, is not just the future of our party but the future of our country, because they have repeatedly been willing to stand up and make tough decisions, some of which are popular with the electorate back home in North Dakota and may not be so popular with people here in Washington, some of which are not popular anywhere, but they just think they're right.

And I have a special feeling for Byron Dorgan. I followed his career long before he became a Senator, and I admired mightily what he did in North Dakota. Kent said he was voted the most powerful politician in North Dakota, and he said that he was sure that the person

handling the revenues in Arkansas wasn't the most powerful person in the State. Actually, he was; I just had sense enough to make sure the folks didn't know that. [Laughter] I don't know how he got out of that box.

I really admire him. He deserves to be reelected. I'm glad you're here to help him. And I'd just like to remind you of a couple of things that often get lost in the hurly-burly of daily events around here. Thanks in no small measure to the leadership that he has exerted and the support that he has given, we reversed more than a decade of trickle-down, supply-side economics and replaced it with invest-and-grow economics. And by the narrowest of margin, thanks to his strong support and his vote, we reduced the deficit 63 percent, and this economy has produced 11½ million jobs for the first time ever in 4 years and the lowest combined rates of unemployment and inflation since the 1960's. That's enough to get him reelected. You deserve that.

In 1992 people talked about problems like crime and welfare as if they would always be with us in the same way that they were. But we have reversed; trends have declined—working with people all over this country—putting 100,000 police on the street; working with States to move people from welfare to work, 2¼ million people. Now it will be 2½ million when